



Charges, denials fuel emotional hearing

FORD IDENTIFIES JURIST AS ATTACKER, ‘ONE HUNDRED PERCENT’

NOMINEE: ‘HUNDRED PERCENT CERTAIN’ ALLEGATIONS ARE FALSE



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST; MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Christine Blasey Ford said the “uproarious laughter” of the attacker and his companion is a vivid memory. Brett M. Kavanaugh denied the accusations and told Democrats that they would “never get me to quit.”

U.S. is transfixed by the spectacle on Capitol Hill

BY LORI ROZSA, BRITTNEY MARTIN AND DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD

LAKE WORTH, FLA. — “It looks like she’s crying,” said Hilda Darkins, 71, as the very long day began. Around her, a group of retirees were sitting around circular tables at the Mid-County Senior Center, watching TV. Several retirees were dabbing their own eyes. “Who can blame her?”

On the TV, two senators were arguing. Then Christine Blasey Ford began to speak. Myrtle Facey, 78, looked at her and tried to make a judgment about someone she had never met.

“She looks scared, and she looks nervous. But I think she’s telling the truth,” said Facey, a retired cashier. “She may have waited a long time to talk about it, but this is something that will never leave you, no matter what happens. You always remember it. You may not think of it every day, but it will always be with you, just like learning the ABCs. You never forget.”

Hours later, at a cigar lounge in Houston, retired police officer Merg Meraia, 54, was drinking a Diet Coke and smoking an Ashton Monarch cigar. Brett M. Kavanaugh’s fiery defense, his voice cracking, convinced him that the Supreme Court nominee was being honest when he denied sexually assaulting Ford.

“If he was even-keeled, I would probably think that maybe we’re not hearing the entire truth about his past,” Meraia said. Instead, AMERICA CONTINUED ON A11

A rare, muted scene on the Hill
An uncharacteristic moment of silence befell Washington. C1

A torrent is unleashed
Ford has given a voice to those who were quiet, Petula Dvorak says. B1

Christine Blasey Ford:
“This was what terrified me the most, and has had the most lasting impact on my life. . . . I thought that Brett was accidentally going to kill me.”

Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh:
“This confirmation process has become a national disgrace. . . . you have replaced advice and consent with search and destroy.”

Sen. Dianne Feinstein:
“What I find most inexcusable is . . . the unwillingness to take these kinds of allegations at face value and look at them for what they are: a real question of character.”

Sen. Lindsey O. Graham:
“To my Republican colleagues, if you vote ‘no,’ you’re legitimizing the most despicable thing I’ve seen in my time in politics.”

Acrimony, resolve as nomination hangs in balance

BY ROBERT BARNES, SEUNG MIN KIM AND ELISE VIEBECK

A different Kavanaugh comes out swinging, hard

BY MICHAEL KRANISH, EMMA BROWN AND TOM HAMBURGER

From the moment he began speaking Thursday, Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh launched into partisan attack mode.

In a remarkable turnabout from the confirmation hearings earlier this month in which he presented himself as the model of neutrality, Kavanaugh fumed that the sexual assault allegations brought against him in recent days had been a “calculated and orchestrated political hit, fueled with apparent pent-up anger about President Trump and the 2016 election.” He called it “revenge on behalf of the Clintons” and pointed to “millions of dollars in money from outside left-



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST

Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) joined in criticism of Democrats in an impassioned speech, calling the confirmation proceedings an “unethical sham.”

wing opposition groups.”

Kavanaugh’s statements marked an extraordinary moment in the history of Supreme Court confirmation battles. Not only was a potential justice on the highest court raging against one of the country’s two major political parties, but he was also leveling a serious allegation — that the process itself was being manipulated.

In her testimony, his accuser, Christine Blasey Ford, stressed that, despite having sent her allegations to two Democrats in Congress, she viewed herself as non-partisan.

“I am nobody’s pawn,” she said.

But over the course of Thursday’s hearing, partisan tensions repeatedly boiled over as Republican CONTINUED ON A6

Day’s divisive bickering is likely to leave a stain on Washington

BY DAN BALZ

Whatever anyone intended, Thursday’s hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee devolved into the worst of Washington. It was a partisan brawl on steroids that will leave the country more deeply divided than before. It ended as many had feared it would, a she-said, he-said moment that left senators with no easy out on the question of whether to confirm Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

The day started quietly

enough, as Christine Blasey Ford took the witness stand to assert that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her 36 years ago when both were teenagers in the Washington suburbs. By the afternoon, after Ford had departed and Kavanaugh had delivered an indignant and sometimes tearful opening statement, it devolved into angry finger-pointing, with Republicans accusing Democrats of character assassination for partisan reasons.

THE TAKE

TAKE CONTINUED ON A8

A national struggle over trust, identity and sexual politics

BY MARC FISHER

The subject was supposed to be the selection of a new justice on the Supreme Court. Instead Thursday’s showdown on Capitol Hill was a raw, scorched-earth confrontation across the nation’s most emotionally wrenching divides. This was men against women, right against left, a cascade of recriminations, explosions of anger, hours of tears and sobs.

A hearing that was supposed to bring clarity instead erupted in thunderclaps from the nation’s built-up tensions over

how the sexes are supposed to behave with each other. Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh and the woman who accused him of sexually assaulting her came before the Senate Judiciary Committee in “the wrong town at the wrong time,” as Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) put it.

The result was affirmation that Washington is as broken as it has ever been. Based on what the senators in the room said, the result was, once again, people hearing mostly what they were inclined to believe. The result, far from clarity, was a DIVIDES CONTINUED ON A6

The most consequential Supreme Court opening in a generation gave rise to the most bitter Senate hearing in memory Thursday, as California professor Christine Blasey Ford accused Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her when both were teenagers and Kavanaugh angrily assailed Democrats for pushing what he said were false charges to “blow me up and take me down.”

The day began with an emotional punch as a self-described “terrified” Ford, her voice shaking at times, described in stark detail being pinned on a bed by a drunken Kavanaugh at a high school gathering.

Hours later, the drama escalated as a seething Kavanaugh faced the Senate Judiciary Committee from the same chair and adamantly denied her charges.

“You may defeat me in the final vote, but you’ll never get me to quit. Never,” the red-faced and defiant nominee told Democrats.

The 53-year-old federal judge was often tearful and paused for gulps of water as he spoke about the toll that the allegations by Ford and two other women have taken on his wife, his children, his parents and his friends.

“This has destroyed my family and my good name,” he said, adding: “This whole two-week effort has been a calculated and orchestrated political hit, fueled with apparent pent-up anger about President Trump and the 2016 election.” KAVANAUGH CONTINUED ON A4

From ‘furious’ to four stars

Trump’s ire about hearing dimmed when Kavanaugh appeared. A8

Quiet, then a Republican storm

Deciding silence wasn’t working, GOP takes new tack: fury. A12

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BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

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